

# The Philatelic Communicator

Quarterly Journal of  
Writers Unit 30, American Philatelic Society

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Fourth Quarter 2000

## 2000 Circulation of Stamp Hobby Publications — A Report and Analysis

by Ken Lawrence

Table 1 — Annual Paid Circulation

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Linn's Stamp News	65,970	65,020	62,202	58,816
The American Philatelist	54,044	53,878	52,608	51,788
Scott Stamp Monthly	25,060	26,357	27,116	30,491
Stamp Collector	17,664	13,463	13,670	15,736
Mekeel's and Stamps	8,159	7,125	6,939	6,604
Topical Time	5,344	5,121	4,989	4,819
U.S. Stamp News	4,010	4,606	4,384	4,762
First Days	2,704	2,791	2,807	2,800

The list of United States stamp hobby publications with average paid circulations in excess of 2,000 copies per issue has now shrunk to eight in my annual Table 1 listing, with the demise this past year of *The Stamp Wholesaler* as a separate publication. You read that prediction here first. Last year I wrote, "*The Stamp Wholesaler*, which has plummeted . . . is now at its lowest ebb. Perhaps it will be next to join the list of defunct stamp periodicals."

Both *Linn's* editor-publisher Michael Laurence and *Scott Stamp Monthly* editor-in-chief Peter Martin opined in editorials that the 15 percent gain in *Stamp Collector's* circulation is partly due to the addition of whatever separate subscribership *The Stamp Wholesaler* had enjoyed when the two periodicals were combined, but Martin added, "I expect that the percentage was small. The move to biweekly, improvements in content and design and aggressive marketing seem to have paid off for *Stamp Collector*." I agree; this second consecutive year of *Stamp Collector's* modest growth is not a statistical fluke.

Despite the generally dismal overall Table 1 picture of dwindling readerships, two of the eight periodicals — *Scott Stamp Monthly* and *U.S. Stamp News* — registered not only substantial growth, but reported their all-time peak circulations in the year 2000, as Table 2 shows. Martin proudly boasted that his monthly "had another record breaking year and topped 30,000 in circulation for the first time, only the fifth stamp periodical to have reached that milestone."

Oddly in contrast to that, *U.S. Stamp News* publisher John Dunn seemed not even to have noticed the 10 percent leap in his

magazine's alleged circulation. He wrote, in the May-June-July-August 2000 issue (May and June cover dates; July and August in the masthead and footers), which arrived at the end of November, "One thing is certain: while we stayed about even with last year, the subscription figures you see in the Publisher's Statement are woefully inadequate."

Table 2 — Peak Circulation (Year)

Linn's Stamp News .....	91,383	(1977)
The American Philatelist .....	55,665	(1991)
Western Stamp Collector .....	35,292	(1960)
Stamps Magazine .....	34,316	(1960)
Scott Stamp Monthly .....	30,491	(2000)
Weekly Philatelic Gossip .....	19,878	(1952)
Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News .....	17,906	(1961)
National Stamp News .....	16,618	(1962)
Topical Time .....	10,607	(1973)
Chambers Stamp Journal .....	9,921	(1949)
The Stamp Wholesaler .....	9,593	(1973)
Stamp Show News .....	8,548	(1979)
SPA Journal .....	8,453	(1978)
Mekeel's and Stamps .....	8,159	(1997)
Southern Philatelist .....	6,035	(1950)
New Stamp Dealer .....	5,407	(1961)
U.S. Stamp News .....	4,762	(2000)
First Days .....	4,053	(1989)

►►continued on page 4

# The Philatelic Communicator

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Joseph E. Foley, Editor

P.O. Box 183

Riva, MD 21140-0183

e-mail: jfoley4197@aol.com

phone: (410) 974-6380

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Manuscripts are solicited on subjects of interest to writers, editors and publishers of all forms of philatelic literature. All submissions for publication, without exception, are subject to being edited. Opinions expressed in *The Philatelic Communicator* are those of their authors, and not necessarily of Writers Unit 30, APS, its officers, editor, publisher or agents. Letters received by the editor may be published unless labeled "Not for Publication." When possible, furnish copy, including letters, on diskettes (WordPerfect 8 or ASCII). Include printed copy with diskettes. All editorial matters must be handled with the editor.

DEADLINES—For receipt of copy by the editor:

First Quarter .....	Jan. 15
Second Quarter .....	April 15
Third Quarter .....	July 15
Fourth Quarter .....	Oct. 15

## WRITERS UNIT 30

Dane S. Claussen, President

1619 E. Lombard Street

Springfield, MO 65802

417 836-7705 (home phone & fax)

417 836-4156 (office direct #)

417 836-5218 (office message #)

e-mail: dsclaussen@hotmail.com



George B. Griffenhagen,  
Secretary-Treasurer

2501 Drexel Street

Vienna VA 22180-6906

703 560-2413

e-mail: gbg@mail.aphanet.org

Officers of Writers Unit 30, a nonprofit corporation, in addition to the President, Secretary-Treasurer and Editor, are:

Vice-president, West

David L. Herendeen

1641-D 237<sup>th</sup> Street

Harbor City, CA 90710

310 530-9386

Vice-president, East

Barth Healey

86 Bar Beach Road

Port Washington, NY 11050-4029

516 944-9690

The Executive Committee includes the officers plus Charles J. Peterson, of Laurel, MD (immediate past president). The WU30 Council includes:

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Writers Unit 30 has as its primary objective the encouragement and improvement of philatelic writing in all of its various forms. Calendar year membership dues, payable in advance in U.S. funds through a U.S. bank or Post Office are:

U.S. Zip code address, bulk rate . . . . . \$10.00

Canada & Mexico, 1st class mail . . . . . \$17.50

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Please report address changes to the Secretary-Treasurer as soon as known in order to avoid loss of issues.

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THE  
QUILL  
*Joe Foley*

## RESPONSIBLE (?) JOURNALISM

The October 2000 issue of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* carried an "invited" article by Ken Lake over the title "Are the Judges always Right?" The leader to the article, apparently expressing the feelings of the editor and/or publisher, noted "Questions regarding some of the awards at The Stamp Show 2000 have arrived in the *GSM* office from a number of sources—so we asked Ken Lake to investigate."

I was not at the show in London and obviously can't comment on the relative merits of one exhibit vs. another. However, Lake's malicious treatment of the exhibit of the winner of the Grand Prix National Award is devoid of both taste and accuracy. The comment "Yet every professional philatelist and experienced collector to whom I've spoken rated it as worth at best a Vermeil because, to quote one of them; 'most of the handful of rarities in it were either fronts, or undated, or in poor condition, and virtually all important pieces were missing,'" is particularly vicious.

By referring to unnamed sources Lake attempts to simulate substance and avoid accountability. (An exercise in mythology?) The exhibit has a track record that has shown improvement over time, and while this is its first large international gold, it is by no means its first international gold. I recently judged a version of this exhibit at the national level (the owner had to tighten it to reduce from 10 to 8 frames for London). The statement "most of the handful of rarities in it were either fronts, or undated, or in poor condition, and virtually all important pieces were missing" is simply *not true*.

The firm of Stanley Gibbons and its publications have a long history in our hobby, and indeed, a very special place. That *GSM* should give voice to such a scurrilous piece is not only disappointing, it is offensive.

## CRASH !

I lost my hard drive (and everything on it), CD drive (twice) and power unit in my computer.

Back up—w e l l —some of us learn our lessons the hard way! At present I'm limping along with a borrowed lap top and, thanks to the Baltimore Philatelic Society, using their computer to get this issue out.

Some of our authors have sent me material by e-mail only, no hard copy. If you don't see your item in this issue, it went down with the hard drive. Please send it in again. □

## NEWS RELEASE IMMEDIATE

### OKPEX 2001 DROPS PHILATELIC LITERATURE COMPETITION

The Philatelic Literature competition will not be held at OKPEX 2001, the WSP show on May 4-6, 2001 in Oklahoma City. OKPEX is sponsored by the Oklahoma City Stamp Club. The Chairman for 2001, Joe H. Crosby, announced that the OKPEX Committee was forced to make this difficult decision because of the lack of support from those writing, editing and publishing philatelic literature, and particularly the lack of interest shown in the special class of competition offered for Stamp Auction Catalogs as literature. OKPEX has been the **ONLY** National Stamp Show that offers awards to Auction Catalogs as a distinct category of philatelic literature. Crosby explained that the show has been required to significantly underwrite the literature portion of the show for the last two years. OKPEX has been pleased and proud to provide this service to the philatelic community for the last five years, but we have decided that, *at least for now*, we can no longer continue to do so.

We are pleased to learn that Chicagopex will include some auction catalogs in their philatelic literature competition this year. We encourage other WSP shows that already offer Philatelic Literature competitions to add Auction Catalogs as a category, and to consider making several sub-categories so that auction firms of all sizes and publishing of all types of sales catalogs can obtain meaningful suggestions from the jury to improve their publications, as well as achieve sufficient entries to provide meaningful competition within each sub-class.

For additional information, contact the Oklahoma City Stamp Club, P.O. Box 26542, Oklahoma City, OK. 73126 or email to [joecrosby@home.com](mailto:joecrosby@home.com)

Editor's note: Accompanying the OKPEX press release was a letter from Joe Crosby which bears reading by all of us who have an interest in philatelic literature. *JEF*

I enclose a news release from OKPEX 2001 which will be of some interest to *The Philatelic Communicator* readers, especially after Michael D. Dixon's excellent White Paper on Philatelic Literature Competitions. Please be assured his comments did not "cause" us to make our present decision. It has been one that has been coming for nearly two years.

You may want to include some additional material about our decision for your publication that probably would not be of interest to the general philatelic press.

We have worked hard to grow our Philatelic Literature competitions for five years, particularly in the Auction Catalog category, which we pioneered. But when you only get three firms to bother to enter their catalogs in 2000, it becomes apparent that there is insufficient interest to justify the expense of judges, awards, time of coordinating the advance mail outs to the jury, providing floor space for public display of the entries, and all the rest. The amount of effort required, versus the response received simply makes it difficult to get any one on our committee to be willing to do the job and do it right. I personally tried for the last two years, and really have gotten the message that the United States just does *not want or need another* Philatelic Literature competition.

It has always been our hope that we could be a positive influence on the publication of better quality auction catalogs

that we all want to keep in our libraries and refer to quite often. We have seen increasing quality over the last five years, not necessarily as literature, but in more color, more illustrations, better lot descriptions, etc. But we know it has been the MARKET that has driven this, not our OKPEX awards.

Still, for all the reasons stated by Mr. Dixon in his fine White Paper, we would encourage the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ) in its review of philatelic literature competitions to take a long and thoughtful look at Auction Catalogs and develop formalized Judging Criteria and Methodology for them AS A SEPARATE CLASS. All former OKPEX literature judges are APS qualified literature judges and would be the best source of input on the subject.

Finally, we have not totally abandoned the field of philatelic literature at OKPEX, only put in on the shelf for a while, to return to it at some appropriate future date ..... maybe 2007 when Oklahoma celebrates its Centennial of Statehood.

*Joe H. Crosby*  
Chairman, OKPEX 2001

Email: [joecrosby@home.com](mailto:joecrosby@home.com)

## ►►2000 Circulation . . . (continued from page 1)

Here we must invert the useful analytical measures that Martin applied to *Stamp Collector*. If Dunn's numbers are to be believed, he has more paying *U.S. Stamp News* subscribers than ever before, despite not once having published this so-called bimonthly magazine on time nor ever having delivered six issues in a calendar year, despite dull content and cheapened appearance, and despite flaccid marketing. How can that be?

Probably it can't, so this year I predict that *U.S. Stamp News* (*USSN*) will be the next publication to vanish from the chart. Dunn himself hinted that this may be coming, but with circumspection bordering on surrealism. He first wrote that he plans to increase the magazine's frequency to monthly (though I'd say bimonthly would be a good start). Then followed the punchline: "And while I am thinking out loud, another idea that I would like to offer for your consideration is the incorporation of *USSN* into our weekly publication, *Mekeel's & Stamps*. The idea would be to turn one issue a month into an enlarged magazine with a major section devoted to *USSN*, and a separate subscription for those who want it."

Those are the major developments of the past year, and the forecast. As ever, this note is required: Comparable figures to those in Table 1 unfortunately are not available for *Global Stamp News*, which does not circulate by periodicals class mail.

In other respects, I'm satisfied that last year's analysis has stood the test of time. The Internet continues its dominance as our hobby's principal communications medium. Publications that creatively and effectively reinvent themselves, such as *Scott Stamp Monthly* and *Stamp Collector*, have proved that they can grow, which suggests that *Linn's* decline is not inevitable, but perhaps it's time for an overhaul. Society publications, which really means society memberships, are flat or slightly declining, with no inspiring testimonials yet reported.

Despite the Internet's proven value and great promise as a medium of rapid communication, *Linn's* attempt to "repurpose" its content by contracting with the inept managers of the Collecting Channel was an abysmal failure, and a harbinger of the dot-com crash that has been the number one business story of 2000. Added to the earlier demise of *NetStamps*, it's evident that an appropriate business model for on-line commercial stamp publishing hasn't yet been found.

There is the challenge for 21st century stamp writers, editors, and publishers. □

## PAST PRESIDENT ELECTED TO FIP POSITION

Charles J. Peterson, a past president of WU30, was elected to the Board of the Federation Internationale de Philatélie at the October congress in Madrid. Charlie has long been associated with the FIP Literature Commission and has a respected international reputation in philatelic literature. □

I've put my genius into my life; I've only put my talent into my works.

—Oscar Wilde

## ►►Letters (continued from page 12)

the way suggesting that it should be easy for columns or journals to get a gold. It should be just as difficult as it is for a book. But a gold ought to be possible if the entry is the best it can be against objective criteria.

5. Further along in Michael's presentation, I am not surprised to note that the purpose of competitive exhibiting as I stated it in paragraph 2 above, is also missing from the FIP aims. All credit to Charlie Peterson for his work to define criteria, and to align US criteria with FIP, but I would suggest that there is no magic in the US following what others are doing; be it the FIP or the German ladder system. What is right for them is not necessarily right for us. For instance, I most emphatically disagree with Michael's (totally off the point) discussion of our national criteria resulting in too many golds in stamp and cover judging. The proof of that pudding is how well our exhibitors AND our apprentice judges do internationally. Yes, it takes some adaptation when our exhibitors and judges go international but the great majority of Americans seem to be able to adapt just fine. And I would suggest that the US has also led the pack in expanding FIP horizons, rather than the other way around. It was from us that the biggest push for acceptance of postal history, theamics, revenues, and modern philately has come. Plus, it is FIP leaders from the USA who have been the point people in developing objective judging standards, tightening up apprenticeing [sic], and encouraging [sic] FIP judges to be accountable. Thus, I am exceedingly tired of being preached to about how wonderful FIP is, combined with the message that our national practices are somehow backward. Rubbish! □

## Literature Exhibition Calendar

Coordinators of Literature Exhibitions are encouraged to submit full information, including a prospectus, for these listings. Please contact the editor well in advance of the closing date for entries.

### March 9-11, 2001

COLOPEX, Columbus, Ohio, Greater Columbus Convention Center. Includes electronic media. \$25 entry fee and entries close Feb. 21, 2001. Information & prospectus from: Harold E. Wilson, 4092 Virginia Circle East, Whitehall, OH 43213, phone (614) 237-3672, e-mail: [ruwilson@ix.netcom.com](mailto:ruwilson@ix.netcom.com)

### May 4-6, 2001

OKPEX, Oklahoma City, Literature Exhibition Segment Cancelled. See page 3.

### August 23-6, 2001

A.P.S. STAWSHOW, Chicago, Ill. For information contact Ken Martin, APS, Box SM, State College, PA 16803, phone 814 237-3803, fax 814 237-6128, e-mail: [kpmartin@stamps.org](mailto:kpmartin@stamps.org)

### 2002

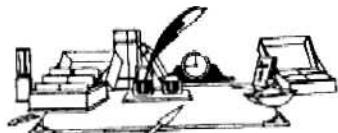
Chester 2002, Literature will be judged to the same standard as Glasgow 2000. Entry fee £15. Information from Michael Birks, 36 Trevor Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 5QK England, e-mail: [mpbirks@36trevor.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:mpbirks@36trevor.freeserve.co.uk) □

## President's

### Message

by

Dr. Dane S. Claussen



The most important news to provide you here in this issue is that the Writers Unit will not be having an official Breakfast at the combined ARIPEX, NORDIA and APS Winter Show in January in Tucson—as projected in the Providence Breakfast program and elsewhere.

The show is putting on a Sunday morning breakfast of its own to announce awards, with only the Grand Prix awards being announced at the Arizona Philatelic Rangers dinner on Saturday night. The APS general membership meeting is Saturday morning, and I understand a first-day ceremony has been scheduled for Friday morning. I also have learned that virtually no one on the Writers Unit board will be attending the show (of course Alan Warren will be there as NORDIA secretary). But perhaps Writers Unit members may want to gather more informally, and your Council Member Lloyd de Vries would be eager to meet with Writers Unit members at the show.

\* \* \*

On a completely separate note, I want to stimulate some discussion on a couple of issues—one of current and future interest and one of historical interest only.

I'll start with the latter. In the Writers Unit we're extremely proud of our Hall of Fame—its age, its selectivity, its prestige. In many cases, it seems to me, Hall of Famers have been chosen primarily for their research skills (a great reason) and/or the quantity, variety and/or longevity of their output (another great reason, don't get me wrong). But I would be interested in hearing from members who would like to select for praise philatelic writers who can and should be recognized for the quality of their writing itself—its pace, tone, vocabulary, structure, humor or other emotions, detail/color, storytelling ability (surely there have been others besides Pat Herst) and so on—the kind of writer whose writing you might read regardless of whether you were interested in the subject. I'd like to publish "nominating" commentaries in this space in an upcoming issue; I should be able to run them verbatim, unless I receive a lot, or especially long ones (in which case I'd edit or paraphrase).

Pick up any publication about higher education or publishing, and sooner or later you will see an article or a letter to the editor about the changes in the publishing business, and what that means for what types of scholarly books are and aren't getting published these days. Recently, I received a letter from Jon E. Krupnick, who has published two books on the theme of "Pan Am's Pacific Pioneers." Krupnick believes that literature should be judged in part on whether it attracts new people to the hobby and/or has a goal of doing so and its contents are consistent with that goal. Whatever the merits of that point, to me Krupnick also implies that not enough philatelic literature is geared toward bringing new collectors into the hobby. Therefore, the second issue I pose to WU30 members is: what kinds of books should be getting published in philately that

aren't (if any), because authors don't have the resources to self-publish, no existing society that publishes will publish it/them, and/or none of the commercial publishers (Scott, Krause, etc.) are interested in publishing them? Are books that should be published in philately not getting published because they aren't getting written, or their topics are too obscure, or their topics are too broad (no one has a special interest in seeing them published), or other reasons. I look forward to reading and reporting your thoughts. □

## RUSSELL V. SKAVARIL—1937-2000

WU30 Council Member Russell V. Skavaril, age 63, passed away on November 29, 2000. Dr. Skavaril held memberships in many specialist societies and assembled several collections. He exhibited nationally and internationally. His favorites were St. Helena and Bermuda. He had been President, Vice President, Treasurer and Show Chairman for the Columbus [Ohio] Philatelic Club. He led Colopex to APS accreditation and organized its first literature competition.

Russell was an APS accredited Chief Judge in both Philately and Literature. Russell had been the secretary-treasurer of The American Philatelic Congress, executive secretary of the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors, and council member of the APS Philatelic Writer's Group.

He was Literature Commissioner for PACIFIC 97. Russell was an Arizona Philatelic Ranger. When he died, Russell was the treasurer of the St. Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha Philatelic Society. During his long tenure as editor, *The St. Helena and Dependencies Philatelic Society Newsletter* became an outstanding quarterly society publication. Russell's book, *St. Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha Philatelic Society's 20 Th Anniversary Anthology* is the first book devoted to these areas of philately.

Russell was a Professor Emeritus in Molecular Biology at the Ohio State University. As professor, he developed an introductory biology course that was administrated entirely by computer. At the time of his death, he was managing five web sites that feature philately. One of these was for the APS Committee on the Preservation and Care of Philatelic Materials. Russell was its chairman. He was working on his first novel and on improving his skill at the game of bridge. Russell is survived by his wife, Mary, their four grown children and his Westie, Nigel.

Jason H. Manchester & Alan Warren □

## DOCUMENT RETENTION

Drafts and manuscripts will usually be retained for approximately ninety days after the issue in which the article, etc., appears is published. Correspondence will normally be discarded after approximately six months. □

I love criticism just so long as it's unqualified praise.

—Noel Coward

# An Open Letter to the President of the American Philatelic Society

by Richard J. Riley

**Editor's Note:** When this was passed on to us, we contacted the author and discussed how it should be treated. The author, Dick Riley, indicated that an open letter to Peter McCann would be appropriate. This is a little unusual for the PC, but it does serve to convey some food for thought.

JEF

Dr. Peter McCann  
PO Box 8000  
State College, PA 16803

Dear Dr. McCann:

For about two years I have watched with interest developments which have been taking place since Howard Varmus, then director at the National Institute of Health, placed his proposal for electronic publications in the biomedical sciences on the internet. My initial reaction was that the proposal would not sell in an appreciable fraction of the offices involved in such publications. Clearly my misgivings were misplaced as time has shown. In case you have not followed these developments, I enclose a *very small* sampling of the literature on the subject which has come my way—I hasten to add that I am only in receipt of *Science*, *Chemical and Engineering News* and an occasional blurb from the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. Particularly telling is the appearance of online only journals and the acceptance of the medium by Chemical Abstracts Service as illustrated by the few pages included which illustrate these developments. The acceptance of the electronic medium by Chemical Abstracts Service is tacit evidence that archival copy, if not presently at hand, will be around in the future. Moreover online journals devoted to nontechnical studies have also appeared.

I ask: whence goeth Philately?

Clearly philately doesn't rate as hard science. I am sure that to some it is trivia though perhaps amusing trivia. The existence of the APRL and philatelic libraries around the world attest to a validity, perhaps more related to concerns of historians and sociologists, and at the bottom folks who revel in sticking bits of paper in prepared slots in stamp albums.

Philatelic libraries functionally, I am sure, differ not a whit from their chemistry, physics and medical brothers: very expensive subscription lists and expensive space to accommodate the stream of publications needing suitable binding, which come their way, their recording, and the burgeoning business of running the operation.

Now I expose my biases

There is no reader's guide to the philatelic literature. Gini Horn (personal communication) yearns for one, which will most likely never come to pass. I can validate the estimate that it would take two man-life times to construct. None of us live that long or have the money to commit to it. None-the-less we could from this decade go forward with a searchable electronic database of our literature. I rued the lack years ago in my preface to Revenue Unit Columns from the *American Philatelist*, Quartermann, 1980. My frustration led in time to the construction of a bibliography of more than 10,000 citations of books, and articles from the serial literature, dealing with

revenue stamps. This appeared as the June issue of the *American Revenuer*, 1997. Incomplete, of course, but a start. Hundreds of additions have since been accessioned for a possible 5-year update. At this time the bibliography is not on the internet. I think eventually it will be. Collectors of lighthouses, elephants, religion, nudes, pony express covers, etc. have no such source. A searchable electronic database attending their philatelic interests would go a long way. Experience has shown the superior flexibility of the electronic version of the revenue bibliography over the hard copy.

Speaking personally, I subscribe to *Linn's Stamp Collector*, the *American Philatelist*, *Philatelic Literature Review*, *Revenue Journal of Great Britain*, *Luren* and *Fiscali*. There are revenue journals that originate in France, Belgium, India, Portugal, Germany, Scandinavia, etc. which I would like to be able to scan and comment on for members of the ARA in the *American Revenuer*, but I can't afford the cost or space for them in my small condo. The internet could solve that issue, not only for me but more importantly the others with other topical interests.

The other side of the coin, I think, is largely one of finance, though archival issues are important and I expect the international community will solve that one for the technical record of value. Scanning some of the material enclosed and links to relevant sites illustrate a panoply of financial arrangements from free online only journals to ones allowing viewers free access and downloading privileges to journals to which one must subscribe to move further into them than just seeing tables of contents.

The argument that we all don't have a PC, I think, is irrelevant. I understand that in Pennsylvania there are still people who get from point A to point B in horse drawn buggies. Every year the percentage of the US population who own PCs increases and soon all of us will own them (except of course the horse and buggy crowd).

I think it is past time the philatelic community came to grips with the issues expressed here. I have yet to see any serious discussion in the philatelic press. The APS as our umbrella society should present the issue to the membership. I am of course aware of the availability of the current issue of the *AP* online at the APRL web site but not whether the current issue will be searchable six months from now.

Please forward the enclosed copy of this letter and the literature, when you are done with it, to Joe Foley, editor of the *Philatelic Communicator*. An SASE for the purpose is enclosed.

I am sorry that there wasn't time to discuss these issues with you when we met at the Anaheim show.

Cordially,

Dick Riley

In the next issue we will have a report by WU30 Council Member Gene Fricks on some very extensive work he has been doing in this area, perhaps not as global as suggested here, but a significant step in that direction.

JEF

## Good Illustrations: The Author's Responsibility

by Harlan F. Stone

Editor Joe Foley has asked me to comment, as past editor of the *Postal History Journal*, on how an editor gets high-quality illustrations for a philatelic publication. My initial response comes, however, from the point of view of an author. During 40 years as a journalist, corporate public affairs director and philatelist, I have authored as much as I have edited

As a philatelist who wants to be an author, I recognize that my job includes researching for factual accuracy, writing for literate fluency, and preparing the best possible illustrations. I am not so lazy that I assume these are the jobs of the editor. What I owe the editor is the most accomplished package of research, writing and illustrations I can provide. My creative drive and pride lead me to strive for such a complete effort

From an editor's point of view, I have found myself often dealing with two kinds of authors who don't understand their jobs. One type repeatedly sends photocopies of covers, postmarks, postal conveyances and portraits that are unacceptable. Another type keeps telling me where I can find the sources for illustrations he needs or desires. Such authors are either too ignorant to understand the task they have undertaken or they don't care what quality of work they attach to their names. Neither conclusion is very flattering.

In cases like these, what can an editor do?

1. Refuse the submitted article.
2. Use the article without illustrations.
3. Instruct the author to provide black and white laser photocopies.
4. Ask for computer-scanned images.
5. Seek black and white glossy photographs.
6. Request the original material to make photographs.

The economics of producing philatelic journals on small budgets often dictates the acceptable alternative. Since I used a computerized typesetting shop for all pre-press work on the *Postal History Journal*, I usually convinced authors to spend the affordable few dollars to send laser photocopies (which usually provide satisfactory light and dark contrasts), then turned these over to the typesetting shop with cropping instructions for final scanning onto my page layouts.

In my 11 years (1989-1999) as editor of the *Postal History Journal*, I learned that some authors don't have the creative drive and pride to make certain their by-line will head an article free of obvious criticisms. They fail to give the editor what he needs and expects. A conscientious editor is busy enough with other tasks (article procurement, copy editing, headline writing, final author approvals, page layouts, proofreading, printer liaison), all against deadlines. He shouldn't have to do an author's basic legwork as well. Sometimes I was unhappy with published issues of the *Postal History Journal* because, as editor, I couldn't fulfill the obligations of authors unwilling to exert themselves. □

## LITERATURE JUDGING

As mentioned in the last issue of the *PC*, the APS Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges has appointed a subcommittee to work on revising Chapter 11 of the fourth edition of the *Manual of Philatelic Judging* that deals with literature. The committee will take a fresh look at the categories, perhaps redefining their scope and possibly adding some new ones.

The committee is seeking input from other judges, editors, publishers, and users of philatelic literature in any form. WU30 members such as Joseph Monteiro and Bob Rawlins have previously offered comments in the pages of this journal on dissatisfaction with the current methods of evaluating literature. Anyone with ideas or suggestions can send them to me in print form (Alan Warren, Box 39, Exton PA 19341) or by e-mail to [alanwar@att.net](mailto:alanwar@att.net) □

## BENDON'S CATALOG

James Bendon has released his latest catalog of philatelic books on a wide range of subjects. WU 30 members may obtain a copy by contacting him at James Bendon Ltd., P.O. Box 56484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus or by e-mail at [books@JamesBendon.com](mailto:books@JamesBendon.com) or it may be viewed on his Website <http://www.JamesBendon.com> □

## CHESTER

The exhibition Chester 2000 to be held in England in November that year has opened its literature competition to WU 30 members. A copy of the prospectus can be obtained by writing to Alan Randall Jones, 61 Cloverley, Brooklands Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 3QE, England, or by e-mail from Michael Birks at [mpbirks@36trevor.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:mpbirks@36trevor.freeserve.co.uk) The exhibition is organized by the North Western Federation of Philatelic Societies on behalf of the Association of British Philatelic Societies and Exhibitions Ltd. □

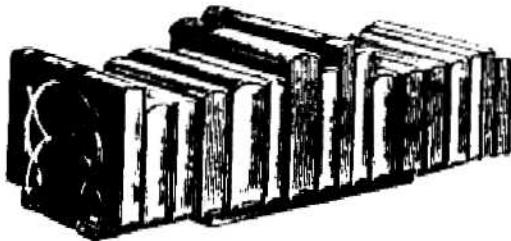
## WU 30 CRITIQUE SERVICE

Past president Charles J. Peterson operates the Critique. There is no charge for the service. Details are:

**Periodicals**—Submit the four most recent issues. Include postage equivalent to four times the **first** class mailing fee. Any unused amount will be returned. Critiques can be expected in about 30 days.

**Books/manuscripts**—Inquire before sending, with a brief description of the item. Please include a stamped, addressed envelope for the reply. The time element for a book or manuscript can vary depending on length, other similar requests at hand and other commitments.

All submissions & correspondence should be sent to Charles J. Peterson, Box 5559, Laurel, MD 20726, phone 301-776-9822, e-mail: [cjp7777@aol.com](mailto:cjp7777@aol.com). □



## REVIEWS

**NOTE:** Material for review may be sent to the editor at the address noted on the inside front cover. Reviews are also welcomed from others. Reviews from those having an interest in the item such as publishers, distributors, etc., must include a copy of the publication with the review [which, on request, we will return]. *Philatelic Communicator* reviews should be concise and stress those aspects that are helpful examples (positive or negative) for other authors, editors and publishers.

***Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia* by David M. Skipton and Peter A. Michalove, John Otten publisher, 1989, two volume boxed set, 488 + ix pages, 9 x 12", hardbound, appendices, index, bibliography & maps, ISBN 0-945629-00-1. Available from Leonard Hartman, Box 36006, Louisville, Kentucky 40233 at \$65 postpaid.**

This is a well documented and intriguing account of the subject. The authors note that there are gaps in our understanding of how the imperial censorship system operated. No doubt with the fall of the former Soviet Union, additional information will come to light. Given that, this book is presented in a manner that is sure to capture the interest of many and provides a plethora of information and background material.

Civil as well as military censorship is covered. Indeed so extensive does censorship appear to have been under the Czar, that one might suspect the uncensored letter to be the exception. Accounts of reading the mail of dukes and grand duchesses in *black chambers* provide not only evidence of the extent of censorship, but also some very fascinating tidbits of history.

The various subjects discussed include foreign and domestic books and periodicals, military and civilian censorship encompassing criminal, diplomatic and political matters as well as court and bureaucratic intrigue.

There are numerous illustrations of applicable postal markings and covers. Included is a detailed catalog of the markings used during the first world war, arranged by city.

JEF

***The Congress Book 2000*, Richard W. Helbock, Editor. American Philatelic Congress. Eight articles in 200 pages, 10 x 7", hardbound, illustrations, tables, with appendices about the Congress, ISBN 0-929333-26-8, Library of Congress Catalog Card #40-2870.**

One looks forward to the annual *Congress Book*, not only because each article often represents a significant contribution to the literature, but also for the trends that the book demonstrates. Not surprisingly, the eight articles in this year's book are all devoted to postal history or postmarks, with only passing mention of stamps, and then invariably only in the

context of the rates they pay.

Since each of the eight articles features a different author and varying styles, each deserves separate mention. "The True Fancies of Maine's Fancy Cancellations," by Nancy B. Clark, offers an update to the limited previous research on 19th Century fancy cancels used in one of the nation's (postally) smaller states. Although deliberately limited in scope, the article offers a classification system for the cancels illustrated, and the 96 markings illustrated represent a significant advance over the two dozen cancels of all styles reported in older references such as Herst-Sampson or Skinner-Enos. Admittedly, a little imagination is sometimes needed to see the image claimed. Maine postal historians will welcome this study.

"World War II Mail from Switzerland to Canada in the Context of the Canadian Cottons Correspondence," by Charles J. LaBlonde. This article was stimulated by the discovery, over years, of a correspondence from a business firm in Switzerland to a factory in Canada. Although the people at both ends of the correspondence turned out to be philatelists, the attractively-franked covers also inadvertently demonstrate the difficulties that wartime mail faced as it traveled from neutral Switzerland, surrounded by war, to North America. LaBlonde has researched his subject extensively, even to the extent of traveling to Switzerland to find the factory from which the correspondence originated.

"Private Mailing Cards — The Domestic Rate Increase of 1925-1928," by Randy Stehle. It is little known that the postage for Private Mailing Cards (primarily picture post cards) was increased from 1 cent to 2 cents between 1925 and 1928, ostensibly to pay for an increase in postal workers' salaries. The increase was rescinded in 1928 when it failed to produce the revenue predicted. Stehle shows a few cards to illustrate how the rate was handled (or mishandled), but devotes most of the article to the political and bureaucratic machinations that surrounded the rate change. His research is admirable and a fascinating study of how government operates.

"An Introduction to the Military Mail of South Viet-Nam," by Joe Cartafalsa. It has been 25 years since the last Americans were evacuated from the embassy in Saigon, but much emotion still surrounds our involvement in the political and military struggles there. Cartafalsa's article, and his related exhibit that has been seen across the country, provides an excellent review of how military mail evolved as the French left southeast Asia and the Vietnamese took over mail processing, up through the defeat of the Republic of Viet-Nam in 1975. As he points out, much is left to be discovered about military mail in Viet-Nam, a process made more difficult by the fact that many records were destroyed when the government collapsed in 1975. Perhaps the only thing more remarkable than the information provided is the image of the author trudging through the jungles of Viet-Nam, a rifle in one hand and covers retrieved from the paper basket by an outdoor latrine in the other.

"Milwaukee Airmail: 1911-1933 Pioneer Flights through the Zeppelin Period," by Robert Baldridge & Michael Dattolico. Milwaukee is not thought of as much of an airmail center, so the amount of aerophilatelic material unearthed by the authors is impressive. The pioneer flights are covered in detail, the city's place on the edge of the early development of

aviation is documented, and even covers that made their way to and from the Graf Zeppelin are discussed. Research is of high quality throughout.

"United States Autogiro Mail," by Peter Martin. This article seems to be the culmination of studies published in a number of journals, including Martin's own *Scott Stamp Monthly*, on mail carried by this strange early aircraft, which might be best described as an airplane with an unpowered helicopter-style rotor on the top. Although it was eventually replaced by the true helicopter, the autogiro has a place in aerophilatelic history from experimental flights conducted in the 1930s at moving mail over short but congested routes. After a thorough review of the subject, Martin concludes the article with what is probably the most complete checklist of American autogiro covers ever published.

"Fifty Years of Turmoil in the Balkans 1875-1925," by Alfred F. Kugel. This is another article inspired by an outstanding exhibit now making the rounds, and one with considerable "current news" content. Although Kugel's exhibit consists primarily of covers, as it should, the article is mostly text (and helpful maps), illustrated with a few covers. It therefore provides a much more cogent discussion of the complexities that have plagued this region of the world for centuries. It provides in 14 pages an excellent synopsis of a subject understood by few.

"United States Military Postal Rates during WW II," by Richard Martorelli. It might seem difficult to produce a significant article on a subject that could be summarized in a couple of paragraphs, but Martorelli has succeeded. He illustrates the use (and misuse) of a wide variety of rates, both domestic and international, as well as mail sent by civilians authorized to use various military concessionary rates. An unusual feature of this article is a discussion of the military situation of the sender (or occasionally recipient) of the covers illustrated, which expands the article considerably. The article is perhaps the most detailed study of the subject yet published.

Technically, *The Congress Book 2000* is of excellent quality, produced by offset on coated paper by Marrakech Express in Tarpon Springs, Fla. Most illustrations are halftones, avoiding the temptation to use computer-scanned illustrations, a technology which (in this reviewer's opinion) has not yet matured. References and source identification are well done, and Martorelli offers several Internet references, including an observation that the Internet auction house eBay can be a good source of images for study!

A publication such as *The Congress Book*, including as it does contributions from several different authors whose personal style varies, offers a study in the concept of "journalistic style," or consistency in format. LaBlonde, for example, gives dates in European/military format (day-month-year), while all other articles, including the several on military subjects, use American style (month-day-year). There is also inconsistency over the positioning of quotations and punctuation marks (the American standard says that punctuation marks *always* go inside the quotation marks). The average reader might not notice, but the experienced journalist does.

Helbock has chosen ragged-right for his text, rather than the more customary fully justified. Overall layout is nevertheless excellent, and that's a compliment from someone who struggles endlessly with layout in a journal. The book is

remarkably free from typographical errors (I challenge anyone to find the two that I noticed).

David A. Kent

**Thomas Leavitt, His History and Postal Markings, 1875 - 1892** by Robert J. Payne, United Postal Stationery Society, Box 1116, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358, 1999, 323 + xvii pages, 8½ x 11", hardbound, illustrations, references, \$40 + \$3 domestic shipping ("overseas" is noted at \$5 for surface), \$8 discount to UPSS and Machine Cancel Society members, ISBN 0-9670045-4-3.

In this book, Robert J. Payne is continuing the work of the late Frank B. Stratton who published extensively on the subject and transferred the rights to his works to Payne.

The book begins with historical background on Leavitt himself, his inventions (including reproductions of patent documents and drawings) and commercial application. Most of this information has been previously published, but having it all in one volume is a convenience.

The bulk of the book is a well-illustrated catalog of the markings, chiefly organized by cities where they were used, 31 in all. There is also a value guide.

JEF

**Battleship Desk Reference** by Robert V. Mustacich and Anthony Giacomelli, available from Robert V. Mustacich, 722 Camino Cascada, Santa Barbara, CA 9311, \$45 postpaid.

The *Battleship Desk Reference* is the first serious attempt to add to what is commonly known as the Chappel-Joyce listing, *Proprietary Revenues of 1898 Precanceled Varieties* published in 1957 by the American Revenue Association. Chappel and Joyce concentrated their efforts on the so-called printed cancels; the *Battleship Desk Reference* places no such bounds on its scope.

The authors enumerated both handstamps and likely users and then attempted to correlate the two lists. This book is the result of that monumental effort. The lists of wholesale druggists, retail druggists, and drug manufacturers from volumes 6, 7, and 9 of the *ERA Druggists Directory of the United States and Canada* form the backbone for a data base of the likely users. The extensive collections of the authors and the Chappel-Joyce list together provide the data for the computerized data base of cancellations.

The authors used the computer to match the lists and to analyze the composition of the likely user data base. Are there errors in identification in Chappel-Joyce? Stamps on surviving original packages have demonstrated several misattributions. Are there likely to be errors in the present work? The authors themselves enumerate the reasons why there may be errors, which only examples on original products will correct. Nevertheless, this effort is an enormous step forward. The authors are to be commended in their gargantuan effort. This is the first major attempt in more than 40 years to identify the possible users of the 1898 proprietary stamps.

The excellent 56 page introduction to the correlated lists provide new insights into the use of the 1898 Battleship proprietary stamps. The tax rates for the various products are presented. Using the Pharmaceutical ERA (a journal contemporary to the tax), the lists of what products were taxable are elucidated and in many cases examples of the

cancellations used on such products are illustrated. The separate discussions of medicines, perfumes and cosmetics, soaps, chewing gum, wines, and a miscellaneous category are the most comprehensive presentation on the taxable products that this reviewer has seen.

The analysis of the resulting lists is sensible and insightful. Of the 7,047 different cancels in the data base, 2,301 are correlated with a known company, a remarkable achievement. However, that leaves about ½ uncorrelated. The authors also analyzed data regarding the nature of the various businesses and how that correlates with the actual uses of the stamps. The insights derived enhance the value of the work that the authors have presented in their lists of cancellations.

From beginning to end this work will set the standard for other similar efforts for years to come. It is a model for the application of computer technology in tackling a previously intractable philatelic problem. For anyone interested in the Battleship proprietary stamps and their users this work is indispensable.

Ronald E. Lesher

**Penguins, Potatoes & Postage Stamps: A Tristan da Cunha Chronicle** by Allan B. Crawford, Anthony Nelson, Oswestry, England., 1999, 166 pages, 7½ by 10", hardbound, ISBN 0-904614-68-9, £25 from Vera Trinder Ltd., 38 Bedford St., Strand, London WC2E 9EU, England.

The author joined an expedition to Tristan da Cunha in 1937 where he served as a surveyor. Thus began an association with the island that lasted over 60 years.

His story begins with that expedition and he shows a post card he sent in 1938 to his grandmother in Wales. During WW II, Crawford served as Councillor after the South Africa Army Engineering Corps established a base there. With no post office or stamps available on the island, mail was handed in open for censorship, then sealed and put aboard ships headed for Cape Town.

Following the war Crawford returned to Tristan da Cunha as a meteorologist. He designed a label that would identify mail originating from the island, petitioned the PMG of the Union of South Africa to have postage stamps prepared, and on his own designed the so-called potato stamps. One penny was worth four potatoes. Although his request for stamps and a post office were denied in 1946, both were achieved six years later. With volcanic eruption on the island in 1961 the post office was closed and the stamps and canceling devices were tossed into the ocean.

In 1963 the post office reopened with use of overprinted stamps from St. Helena. Additional philatelic events are noted such as the Rowland Hill souvenir sheet of 1979, the 150th anniversary of the Royal Geographic Society issue, and Crawford's return in 1984 to Tristan when more stamps were designed.

The ensuing chapters are devoted to the design and development of many stamp issues with historic background on the reasons for the stamps. The design and final issues are illustrated as well as some first day covers.

The book also illustrates some mail from other associated islands such as Bouvet, Marion, and Crozet. Crawford

established a meteorological station and post office on Marion Island in 1947-48. A number of special Tristan da Cunha cachets are shown. The technical aspects of book production including illustrations (a number are in color), editing, typeface, layout and binding are all first rate. This is an important addition to the library of Tristan collectors.

Alan Warren □

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## NEW SERVICE FROM THE COLLECTORS CLUB OF CHICAGO

Les Winick, president of the Collectors Club of Chicago recently announced that *AskPhil.org*, the non-commercial philatelic reference site sponsored by the Collectors Club of Chicago, has opened a dynamic want-list service as part of its just-completed site upgrade of <http://www.askphil.org>.

The free want-list service allows a collector to upload wants for a given country or topic, with appropriate heading, and then make it available to any dealer or collector who may have material to sell or swap. The collector notes his/her e-mail address. Additional address information is only necessary when an agreement is reached for a sale or trade.

*AskPhil*, and the Collectors Club of Chicago, take no role in any transactions sparked by the new free want-list service, other than serving as the meeting place.

Another new feature is "My Favorite ..." which may include a favorite stamp, cover, or item of philatelic memorabilia.

Links to the *AskPhil* site are found on philatelic websites worldwide, including those from at least a half-dozen postal administrations. □

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## 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF *Netherlands Philately*

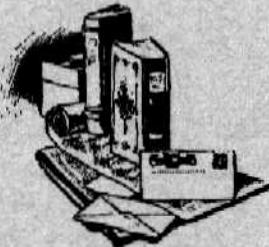
This year the American Society for Netherlands celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary with a very special issue of their journal, *Netherlands Philately* (Volume 25, Number 1). Beginning with a special three color cover, the issue carried 75 pages on coated paper.

There is considerable variety in the ten major articles and all collectors of this area, regardless of their particular interest certainly found something of interest. Other editors of groups considering celebrating a major milestone of their organization could use this as a model. □

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All writers are vain, selfish, and lazy, and at the very bottom of their motives there lies a mystery. Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. Once would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand. For all one knows that demon is simply the same instinct that makes a baby squall for attention.

—George Orwell



## LETTERS

**From Barth Healey:** I've come across another book on magazine design that our editor members might like to track down. It's called *Designing for Magazines*, by Jan V. White, and was published in 1976 by R.R. Bowker Company, New York (ISBN 0-8352-0900-8). I suspect it may be out of print, given its great age, but I found a copy in a local library.

There are in fact two advantages in the fact that this book is 24 years old: As far as I can tell, the word "computer" does not appear anywhere; the focus is entirely on design through a most basic and useful approach. Also, the book is entirely in black and white, which mirrors how most journal and newsletter editors actually publish.

The author says this book is a sequel to an earlier, apparently more fundamental work, *Editing by Design*, whose purpose is described thus: "to describe a technique of putting together a publication that melds the designer's visual skills and the editor's verbal ones into a unified product." Sounds sensible, and I'll keep an eye out, but I don't have any information on this book at the moment.

**From Daniel C. Warren (M.D.) Associate Editor, *The Confederate Philatelist*:** I've followed with some interest the comments regarding the use of degrees such as the M.D. in philatelic writing. As an editor/writer who is one and uses it, I'll offer my two cents. For those of us who are physicians, the initials have really become a part of our name. We're generally accustomed to signing that way dozens of times daily on prescriptions, patient records, insurance forms, and reams of other documents where the use of the degree is mandatory. For that reason, my signature block looks rather odd and denuded to me without it. I add the initials after my name reflexively, and have done so for 35 years. Other doctoral or professional degrees aren't ordinarily used in quite the same way, except for dentists and veterinarians.

Likewise, it falls oddly on my ear to be called "Mr. Warren," and my initial thought is that "You don't mean me, do you?". The title becomes part of the way in which you are used to hearing your name spoken. It's similar to when some telemarketer calls me "Daniel" on the phone; those who know me well enough to use my first name know me as "Dan" and I can immediately tell this is not a genuine call.

No, it doesn't mean anything at all in regard to my philatelic expertise; while there are always those for whom such appellations are an ego trip, for most of us that have been around for a while it's just how we are used to being identified. If I did things in the European style, I'd sign "Daniel C. Warren, B.S., M.D., M.P.H., M.M.A. S., FACPM, FRSR (L)"

(if anyone wonders what all that means, ask me the next time you see me). On the other hand, if I were to write something for the *American Revenuer* (I do belong to the A.R.A., mainly to get Ken's outstanding journal), and the Editor pruned everything down to just the bare name, I would live with that too, even if it did look a bit odd to me. As an editor, if someone wants to use M.D., Ph.D., Grand Potentate of the Sons of the Desert, or anything else as long as it's not obscene, that's all right with me as well!

**From John M. Hotchner, Accredited Literature Judge at the APS and FIP levels:** With reference to Michael Dixon's "Quo Vadis Philatelic Literature Competitions?" in the Third Quarter, 2000 issue of *The PC*:

1. The introduction contains an inaccuracy. CANEJ has not just recently been drawn into the fray on literature judging. I specifically charged Peter McCann as CANEJ Chairman during my term as APS President with the task of reviewing the competitive literature scene after reading the discussion of the issues in *The PC* beginning late in 1997. The present effort is an extension of that initiative, and it began well before Scott Publishing made its offer.

2. Michael's treatise is literate and entertaining. But while I think he has reached the right conclusions, it is not always for the right reasons. For instance, in the discussion of the purposes of literature competitions, he has left out the major reason for bothering to hold such competitions, which is one of the same major reasons for holding stamp and cover exhibit competitions: To reward accomplishment and thereby to encourage more of the same.

3. He can blithly [sic] dismiss literature competitions as pot hunting or boosting of egos, and it is certainly that to a substantial extent. But what do any of us care what the process does to weight down somebody else's basement shelf? What we SHOULD care about is that the practitioner whose work is recognized and rewarded is thereby motivated to continue to produce, and s/he is also motivated to learn from critique and improve the product. This is especially true of the non-book writers, who usually have deadlines to meet on a regular basis (for columns, newsletters, journals, on- or off-line), and are perhaps more easily discouraged than a book author, who gives birth to his or her single elephant, and can then rest on his or her laurels [sic] for life.

4. I believe that each "division" should be judged, as in philately, against THE BEST OF WHAT IT CAN BE, not against the best of what the most scholarly book can be; as is currently the method. We need to define what each type of literature exists to do, and then define levels of achievement according to how well entries actually achieve. As authors and editors of books, columns, society journals, etc. we have fundamentally different tasks, and even fundamentally different audiences. And the judging criteria ought to address that. When they do, we will have a fair process. I am not, by

>>continued on page 4

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## **SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

**(As of December 6, 2000)**

### **Welcome Our New Members**

1863 David L. Straight, P.O. Box 32858, St. Louis, MO 63132. Editor: <i>Beer Tracks</i> (Webster Grove Stamp Club); Columnist: <i>Stamp Collector</i> ; Free-lance Writer: <i>Linn's Stamp News</i> and <i>Scott Stamp Monthly</i> . Sponsor: Janet Klug.
1864 Norman Shoemaker, P.O. Box 213, Woden, TX 75978-0213. Editor: <i>Permit Patter</i> (Mailer's Postmark Permit Club) Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
1865 David Harrison, 3626 Holly Tree Trail, Garland, TX 75044-6160. Free Lance Writer: <i>Mekeel's and Stamps Magazine</i> . Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

### **Address Changes**

0962 Nicholas Shestople, P.O. Box 891551, Temecula, CA 92589-1551
1475 Richard E. Drews, P.O. Box 1158, Palatine, IL 60078-1158.
1862 Alfred E. Mack, 2571 Guthrie Avenue, Valley View Manor, 210A, Des Moines, IA 50317-3019.

### **Deceased**

Russ Skavaril of Columbus, OH, member of the WU#30 Executive Committee (see obituary, page 5)

Membership Dues are noted on page 2

